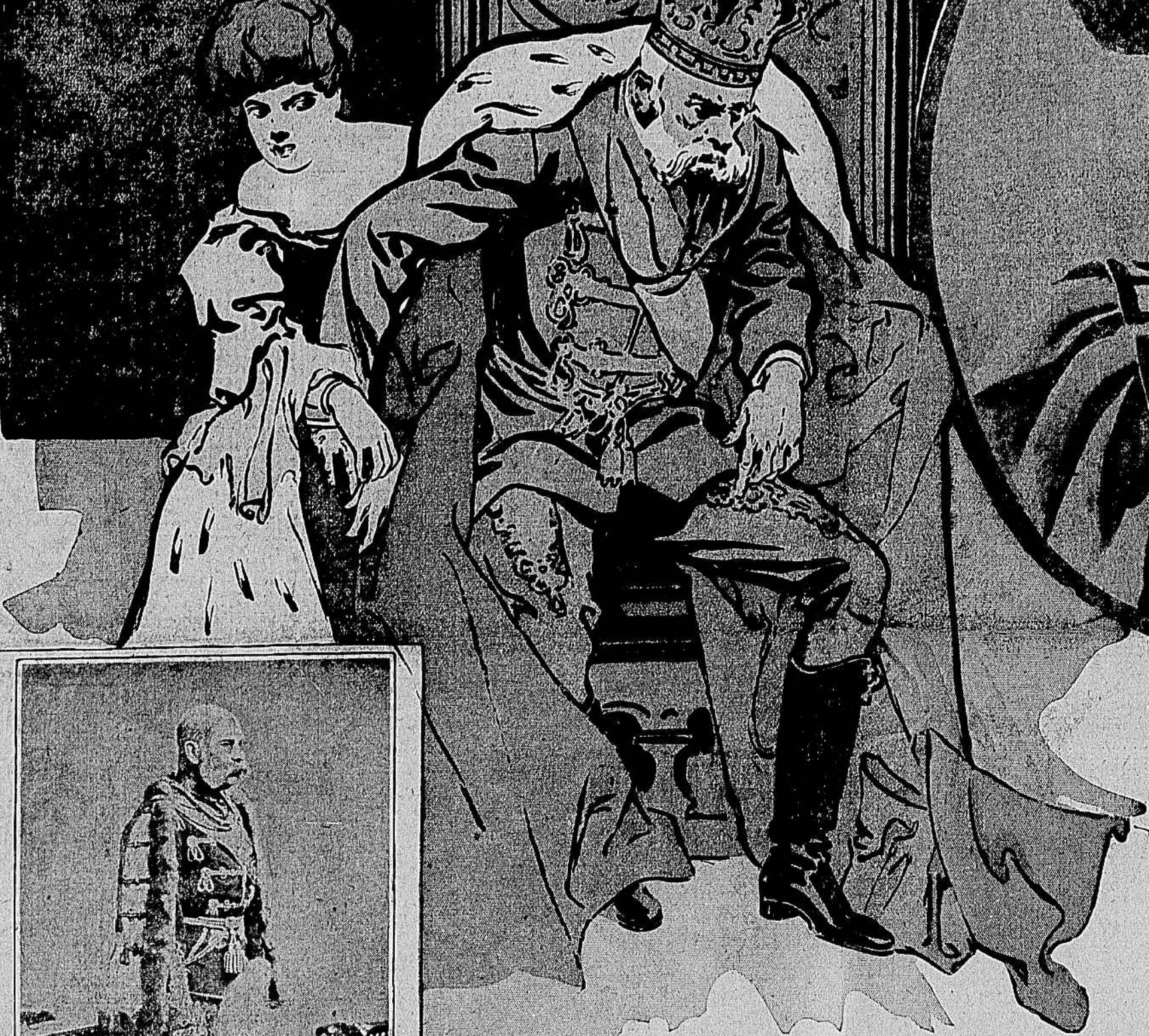




# THE WOMAN BEHIND THE AUSTRIAN THRONE



Emperor Franz Josef.



Kathi Schratt, as she appeared when in America.



Latest Photograph of Kathi Schratt.

SIX MONTHS AGO an interview between Francis Kossuth, leader of the Hungarian radicals, or Independent party, and the Emperor of Austria would have been considered impossible.

It was the hand of Francis Joseph that signed the death warrant of Kossuth's father. That patriot held views but little more advanced than those freely and openly expressed by the son to-day.

Under the leadership of Francis Kossuth a powerful party, or combination of parties, has grown until it was able, at the January elections, to overthrow the Hungarian Premier, Count Tisza, and gain control of the National House of Representatives.

Tisza was accused of usurping more power than was accorded him by the constitution. The radicals also demanded a more equitable system of taxation, a reapportionment of representation in Parliament, and greater liberty for Hungary.

## STATESMEN DECIDE TO WIN HER FAVOR

While the Independent party seeks complete independence of Hungary from Austria as a nation, its leaders advocate the continuation of their country under the personal sovereignty of the head of the House of Hapsburg, and a mutual protective union between the two nations.

To all these plans Count Tisza was vehemently opposed. A storm of considerable magnitude has been brewing in Hungary for some years. Popular outbreaks have occurred from time to time, and Parliamentary sessions have witnessed many scenes of turbulence.

Kathi Schratt, who had married a Hungarian in her youth, and had lived a number of years in that country, saw the menace in the situation more clearly, probably, than did the Austrian Emperor.

She had secured such influence over him, and had been taking a hand in affairs of state to such an extent, that she boldly advanced her views when statesmen of the Vienna court held back.

It was upon her urgent counsel—her insistence, in fact—that Francis Joseph spent several weeks in Hungary early in December. At that time Budapest, the capital, was in a turmoil.

Several days after the arrival of the Emperor in Budapest, Kathi Schratt also appeared there. Soon all the city knew that the famous actress was visiting Francis Joseph in the castle which the Hungarian nation had presented to the Empress-Queen upon her coronation.

The actress was giving the Emperor advice upon the situation. "If it has come to this in Hungary, that the influence of a woman shall predominate, it is certainly better that the woman should stand upon our side than upon the side of our enemies," Kossuth and the other leaders of the radicals agreed.

When Kathi Schratt returned to her hotel that evening she found an aristocratic statesman awaiting her. He sent up his card and was accorded an audience.

Calmly the actress listened to his plea, and then she promised assistance as far as she would deem it just. Next day Kathi Schratt returned to Vienna.

It was for December 13 that Count Tisza planned his master stroke. On that day he intended to march the Emperor's bodyguards into Parliament, take forcible command and execute his wishes with the delegates.

Of all this the actress friend of the Emperor was informed by the radicals. Immediately she telegraphed to Francis Joseph from Vienna her advice. As a result Tisza found his plan completely blocked.

Personally and politically the Emperor had sided with Tisza during the latter's long struggle against the rising tide of radicalism. It was only the hand of Kathi Schratt that kept him from throwing the weight of his official influence into the scales.

Under her advice he held aloof, however, and Tisza was swept from power by his adversaries.

This result bore out her powers of perception and strengthened her with the aged monarch, who scarcely knew which way to turn amid the tumult that surrounded him.

## COUNSELED REPRESSION WITH A STRONG HAND

Although the Emperor was greatly worried by the result of the elections, it was obvious that Hungary must have a Cabinet to succeed the discredited one, and that the new Premier must be in accord with the majority of the popular house of Parliament.

What to him must have seemed the extreme measure of summoning Francis Kossuth into conference did not occur to either the perplexed monarch or his equally perplexed advisers.

Once more the clear-headed woman came to the front. She urged that Kossuth be sent for, in order that the aims and purposes of the Independence party might be discussed.

To the utter astonishment of his court, Francis Joseph gave his consent, and once more the power behind the throne was manifest.

To all appearances, the opinions of Kathi Schratt upon Hungarian affairs seem to have undergone a change of late.

At one time she was strongly opposed to the anti-government elements in that kingdom, and coincided with the Emperor's emphatic views upon the subject.

She counseled repression of all socialistic tendencies with an iron hand, and advocated the free use of troops and police in quelling the many disturbances in Budapest and elsewhere.

Not only is Kathi Schratt puissant in political matters, but she is powerful enough, even, to block the plans of the imperial family in personal affairs.

A number of years ago it was reported that the Emperor was about to offer his hand in marriage to the young Queen Wilhelmina of Holland.

It was current report that machinations to that end had been set on foot by Francis Joseph's daughter, the Archduchess Marie Valerie, and other members of his family.

This proud princess was possessed of an overweening fear that her august father contemplated a morganatic union with Kathi Schratt, and to circumvent such a match she set about endeavoring to marry the Emperor to one of his own rank.

Whatever may have been the influence of the Archduchess, and whatever her plans, the young Queen did pay a visit to Vienna.

Accompanied by her mother, she spent several days in the Austrian capital as the guest of the Emperor, who paid her marked attention.

The expected matrimonial announcement, however, failed to be made.

## THE EMPEROR MADE NO SECOND MARRIAGE

Holland's Queen may have looked coldly upon any such proposition. In Austrian court circles, however, Kathi Schratt was credited with preventing a second marriage of the Emperor.

Not long afterward Vienna and all the other capitals of Europe were full of the rumor that the Emperor and the actress had contracted a morganatic marriage.

Denials were made, but the rumor kept persistently afloat. It is believed in many quarters to-day.

As justifying belief in the report, it is pointed out that suggestions for the marriage of Francis Joseph to one of the other eligibles of European courts ceased about that time and have not been heard since.

Almost from that moment, too, Kathi Schratt became more open in

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NO EMPRESS graces the throne of Austria-Hungary. Nevertheless, the hand of a woman virtually controls the destinies of that empire-kingdom.

Next to the venerable Francis Joseph himself, Kathi Schratt, an actress, is the most puissant personage in all the realm. And at no time has her power been so evident as to-day.

Throughout Europe the belief is widespread that Kathi Schratt is really the morganatic wife of the Emperor, although official denial of the rumor has been sent out from Vienna, as was most likely in any event to be the case.

She has more influence with the aged head of the Hapsburgs than any other person in the land. He takes no step without first asking her advice. Particularly is this true with regard to Hungary, where bitter strife has waged for the past several months.

Upon her advice the Emperor, to the astonishment of all Austria, recently received Francis Kossuth, son of the great Hungarian patriot and leader of the radicals, and listened carefully to his arguments and pleas.

Also by her advice the Emperor overruled the Hungarian premier when he planned, a few weeks ago, to take charge of the Hungarian Parliament by force. In themselves these facts are regarded as demonstrating the dominating influence of Kathi Schratt in public affairs. Indeed, she is acknowledged at present to be the power behind the throne of Austria.